

# Ambassador Church Elder Board Ministry Statement

## Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this document is to establish the principles and functional guidelines around the roles, responsibilities, and leadership culture of the Ambassador Church Elder board.

The overall responsibility of the elder board is to lead, direct and develop the people and ministry of Ambassador church to fulfill its calling to “make and equip disciples from all nationalities to be Christ’s ambassadors to all the nations, by loving God, one another and the world”.

Core Principles toward achieving this responsibility:

1. **Submission to Christ and God’s word** – ministry leadership is not a platform to advance personal or group agendas, but is a commitment to Christ’s mission for Ambassador Church as stated through the mission statement.
  - a. Any and all decisions of the board should be in submission and consistent with normative principles to scripture.
  - b. The elder board must protect and maintain doctrinal purity. We will not tolerate false teaching to enter or perpetuate at Ambassador church.
  - c. We must exercise biblical church discipline when called by scripture.
2. **Team work and servant leadership** - Church eldership is a team sport, relying on godly leaders who work together to care for each other and shepherd the church out of reverence for Christ.
  - a. The board of elders is given biblical and legal authority for governing the church when acting as the board, not as individual board members.
  - b. As a governing body, the elder board is responsible to operate according to the Ambassador Church constitution and bylaws.
  - c. The board of elders is responsible to consider together God’s leading in the areas of strategic direction and future planning in order to fulfill the mission and vision of the church.
  - d. We recognize that believers are given different but complementary gifts that are meant to be used and coordinated for the good of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12). Nowhere is this truer than in a board of church elders.
  - e. We will look to mentor and develop future elders who in order to protect the mission and calling of Ambassador Church.
3. **Unity (Philippians 2:2)** – although the elder board may not be unanimous in all decisions that must be made, the board must maintain unity.
  - a. We will not practice “parking lot politics” at the board or any level of the church. We will stand unified behind decisions that are made by the elder board regardless of our stance before the decision was made.
  - b. We must lovingly but firmly guard against divisions in within the church.
  - c. We will not micromanage or obstruct ministry implementation by pastoral staff, ministry leaders, deacons, or congregants. Rather we will gently and humbly teach and biblically correct activities and attitudes that are not aligned with God’s word or Ambassador Church mission, core values, and statement of faith.

4. **Character and Integrity (I Tim 3 and Titus)** – elders must be qualified by biblical standards and exemplify Christ-centered character and integrity.
5. **Grace** – As sinners saved by grace, elders must exemplify the grace of God. Because we have been released of our spiritual debt, we are compelled to offer grace freely and without hesitation for wrongs big or small. How can we ask non-believers to receive the grace of God that we cannot exercise in our own lives?

### **Summary of Elder Board Functions:**

#### Primary Responsibilities:

1. The board will pray for the congregation, the pastoral staff, and themselves
2. The board will monitor (oversee) the church in several areas:
  - a. The church's spiritual condition
  - b. The church's strategic direction (mission and vision)
  - c. The church's essential biblical doctrines
  - d. Assure that the church's beliefs and teachings agree with the essential doctrines of the Bible
  - e. Assure that the senior pastor agrees with the church's doctrinal statement and hires only staff that concur
  - f. The senior pastor's character and leadership, formally evaluating his ministry once a year.
  - g. Provide ongoing accountability to the senior pastor and fellow board members in the areas of character, ministry competency and spiritual calling.
3. The board will make major decisions that affect the church, except for decisions that are under the authority of the senior pastor, or congregation under the constitution.
4. The board will write church policy in at least three areas:
  - a. Policies governing the board itself
  - b. Policies governing the senior pastor
  - c. Policies governing the board's relationship to the senior pastor
5. The board will serve in an advisory capacity to the senior pastor.

#### Occasional Responsibilities:

6. The board will oversee the selection of the senior pastor
7. The board will serve as an arbitrator in any disputes with the senior pastor.
8. The board will protect the senior pastor from those who would seek to undermine him or his ministry
9. The board may ordain and license as a local church, and/or make recommendations to the denomination to ordain and license people for ministry.

## **Appendix A: Definition and Qualifications of Elders:**

The Biblical qualifications for Elders and leaders in the New Testament Church are found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. It is also critical, however, that the members of the Elder Board be good at working at a strategic level, above the details of the church ministries activities. We believe an effective member of the Elder Board is one who:

- Exhibits Godly character and lifestyle
- Has a deep passion for Jesus
- Exhibits personal humility
- Loves people
- Is forward-looking with an open, creative spirit
- Willingly agrees with God's leadership assignment for him to serve as an Elder
- Is team-focused, understands good "boardmanship"
- Has positive influence with others
- Is a purveyor of hope
- Has an action bias, is not satisfied with the present, but is always seeking to move towards what God wants for Ambassador Church.

## **Appendix B: Relationship of the Elder Board to the Senior Pastor**

The elder board corporately entrusts the senior pastor with the authority to be the primary leader of the church and its ministry. In the Ambassador Church context:

1. The senior pastor answers only to the elder board when it acts corporately as the board, not to any one individual including the board chairman, any board member, any board committee, or any individual in or outside of the congregation.
2. The senior pastor and all elder board members including the chairman must minister together and relate to one another as equals, but with distinct roles within the church. The key theme here is mutual submission to the authority of Christ.
3. The senior pastor as the primary, designated leader of the church has spiritual authority over individual board members except when they act corporately as the elder board.
  - a. The senior pastor may confront an individual board member over spiritual issues in a Christ-like and biblical manner.
  - b. An elder board member will align himself with spiritual leadership of the pastor when functioning on the board or serving in a church-related ministry.
  - c. The pastor will not tell a board member how to decide or weigh in on an issue unless the action is in violation of normative scriptural tenets, the Ambassador Church constitution, policies or mission.

## **Appendix C: Relationship of the Elder Board to the Deacon Ministry/Board**

To be written. Pending official formation of Deacon Ministry